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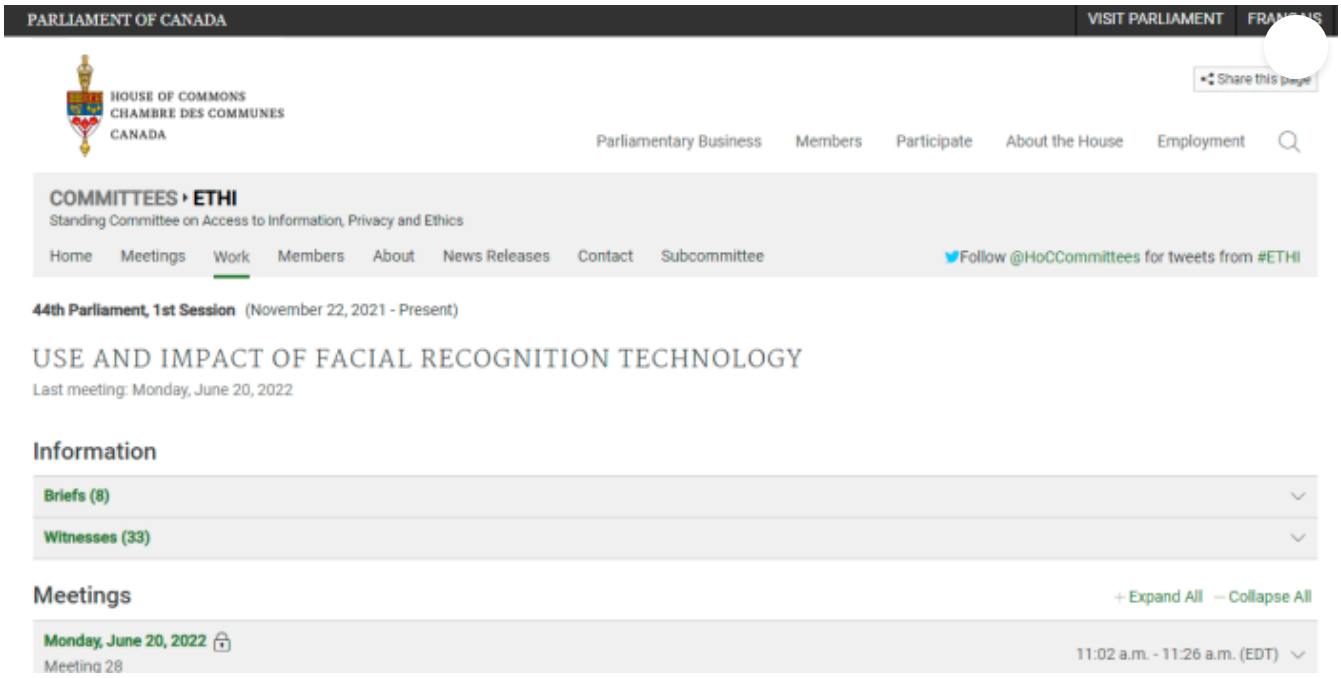
Canadian Parliament To Resume Study On Facial Recognition Use After Summer Break



The Canadian Parliament is taking a break for the summer on studying the issue of facial recognition in society. Considering the vast privacy implications, this isn't a topic to be decided lightly.

There have been 8 briefs submitted for public viewing, and some 33 witnesses have been scheduled to appear before the House of Commons. There has been overlap in the concerns, particularly around what sort of safeguards would be in place to prevent misuse and abuse of this technology.

Questions have also been asked about how reliable this type of equipment is, and can its use inadvertently lead to large numbers of false positives. This seems particularly true given how many people are still wearing masks. Beyond that, how broadly could this be used? Would the scope be narrow and focused, or turned onto society more broadly?

Given the increasing use of AI, or artificial intelligence, it seems that much of this would be done automatically, with little to no personal oversight. That again raises the potential for more errors.

And really, many just don't want such systems around.

Hearings went from March through June 2022. However, with Parliament recessed for the summer, the issue is on hold for the time being.

The timing is also bad for another reason. Earlier this year, it was revealed that the Public Health Agency of Canada had been tracking cell phone data from users without their knowledge or consent. See their recommendations. This doesn't exactly contribute to gaining the public's trust.

Clearly, we will have to see where things go this these issues. However, there is a significant portion of the population which is unhappy with ever encroaching measures.

(1) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/ETHI/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=11566271
(2) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/ETHI/Brief/BR11882158/br-external/MaslejNestor-e.pdf
(3) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/ETHI/Brief/BR11713948/br-external/CanadianHumanRightsCommission-e.pdf
(4) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/ETHI/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=11471238
(5) https://canucklaw.ca/privacy-phac-snooping-on-cell-phone-records/
(6) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/ETHI/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=11471238
(7) https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/ETHI/report-4/
(8) https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/ETHI/Reports/RP11736929/ethirp04/ethirp04-e.pdf

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